



Development Control Report No. 295

**11 Bregagh Road
Carrivcashel
Co. Antrim**

AE/15/26

Philip Macdonald

Summary for Incorporation into the SMR Database

Archaeological excavation of the footprint of an extension to a farmhouse was undertaken in order to fulfill a condition of planning permission that was requested because a souterrain (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:094) is reportedly located within the vicinity of the farm. Superficial deposits associated with the farmyard were mechanically excavated exposing the truncated surface of the natural boulder clay subsoil. Three features dating to the twentieth century were cut into the natural subsoil. These were documented using the standard context recording method. A *sondage* into the natural subsoil was mechanically excavated in order to verify that the subsoil was not redeposited. No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the excavation.

Site Specific Information

Site Name: 11 Bregagh Road, Carrivcashel.

Townland: Carrivcashel.

SMR No (if applicable): ANT 013:094 [also ANT 013:026].

Irish Grid Ref: D06652960.

County: Antrim.

Excavation Licence No.: AE/15/26.

Planning Ref. No.: D/2014/0072/F.

Date of Excavation: 20/2/15.

Archaeologists Present: Philip Macdonald.

Brief Summary: Archaeological excavation of the footprint of an extension to a farmhouse undertaken in order to fulfill a condition of planning permission. No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the excavation.

Type of excavation: Mitigation undertaken to fulfill a condition of planning permission. Superficial deposits were mechanically excavated under the supervision of the licensee (Philip Macdonald) and the underlying, exposed surface, deposits and features were documented using the standard context recording method. A *sondage* into the natural subsoil was mechanically excavated in order to verify that the subsoil was not redeposited.

Size of area opened: A single, near-rectangular trench, approximately 14.5 metres by 4.5 metres in size.

Current Land Use: The site formed part of a concrete yard and formerly included a now-demolished extension to the farmhouse.

Intended Land Use: Residential.

Account of the Excavation

The aim of the excavation was to preserve by record any deposits or features of archaeological significance within the footprint of an extension to a farmhouse (11 Bregagh Road) located within the yard of a farm in the townland of Carrivcashel, Co. Antrim.

Excavation had been made a condition of planning permission (Planning Reference No. D/2014/0072/F) for the extension because a souterrain (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:094) is reportedly located within the vicinity of the site.

Background

In the early 1990s, a souterrain (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:094) was reported to a member of the Inspectorate, and was subsequently recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record's SM7 file, as being 'apparently located close to a farm adjacent to (and to the NW of) SMR ANT 013:026'.¹ SMR ANT 013:026 is the Sites and Monuments Record Number for a revetted mound situated at Irish Grid Reference D06762954² - a distance of approximately 125 metres to the southeast of the farmhouse at 11 Bregagh Road (Figure One). The mound is represented as an ancient 'fort' on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey's 6" map, which was surveyed in 1832 (Figure Three). Although currently obscured by vegetation, it is apparent that the mound is a near-circular, artificial structure some 18 to 21 metres in diameter which, from the north, rises over two metres above the level of the surrounding ground surface. The mound is fenced-off within a rectangular-shaped enclosure of relatively recent date which is located between two fields



Figure One: The revetted mound from the northwest (20.2.15). Scale 2.0 metres.

¹ http://apps.ehnsni.gov.uk/ambit/docs/ANT/ANT_013/ANT_013_094/Public/SM7-ANT-013-094.pdf - accessed 26th January 2015.

² http://apps.ehnsni.gov.uk/ambit/docs/ANT/ANT_013/ANT_013_026/Public/SM7-ANT-013-026.pdf - accessed 26th January 2015.

that belong to neighbouring farms. The revetment is a dry-stone construction made up of large stones apparently derived from the natural subsoil of boulder clay. The northeastern and southwestern corners of the fenced-off enclosure contain large piles of tumbled stone apparently derived from the revetment suggesting at least one episode of collapse or partial demolition in the past. The integrity of the mound has been compromised by both root action associated with the thick overgrowth that covers the mound and on-going burrowing by rabbits (Figure Two). The extent of the burrowing is so great that on its western side the revetment has effectively become a freestanding wall. The adjacent remains of a sunken lane running immediately to the south of the mound are visible. This lane is one of two accessing the mound which are first depicted upon the 1832 6" Ordnance Survey map (Figure Three).



Figure Two: Part of the northern face of the revetted mound showing on-going disturbance as a result of rabbit burrowing (20.2.15).

Scale 2.0 metres.

The revetted mound is almost certainly the ‘cashiol’ [i.e. cashel] recorded by O’Lavery as being associated with a souterrain (1887, 95). O’Lavery described the site as a ‘cashiol or circular stone fort’ whose ‘wall is of the usual cyclopean style, averaging from 3 to 5 feet in height, composed of stones, of very unequal dimensions, and earth’. O’Lavery’s description continues, ‘along the foundation of the wall the stones are more regularly laid and are more uniform in size. The elevated platform on which it stands seems composed of small stones with earth intermixed. A cave [i.e. souterrain] extends under the cashiol, and at a distance of 10 perches [i.e. 64

metres]³ east of the cashial a paved hearth was discovered' (1887, 95). O'Laverty's account of this antiquity is largely derived from that section of the Ordnance Survey Memoirs on the ancient topography of the Parish of Loughguile which was prepared by J.Stokes

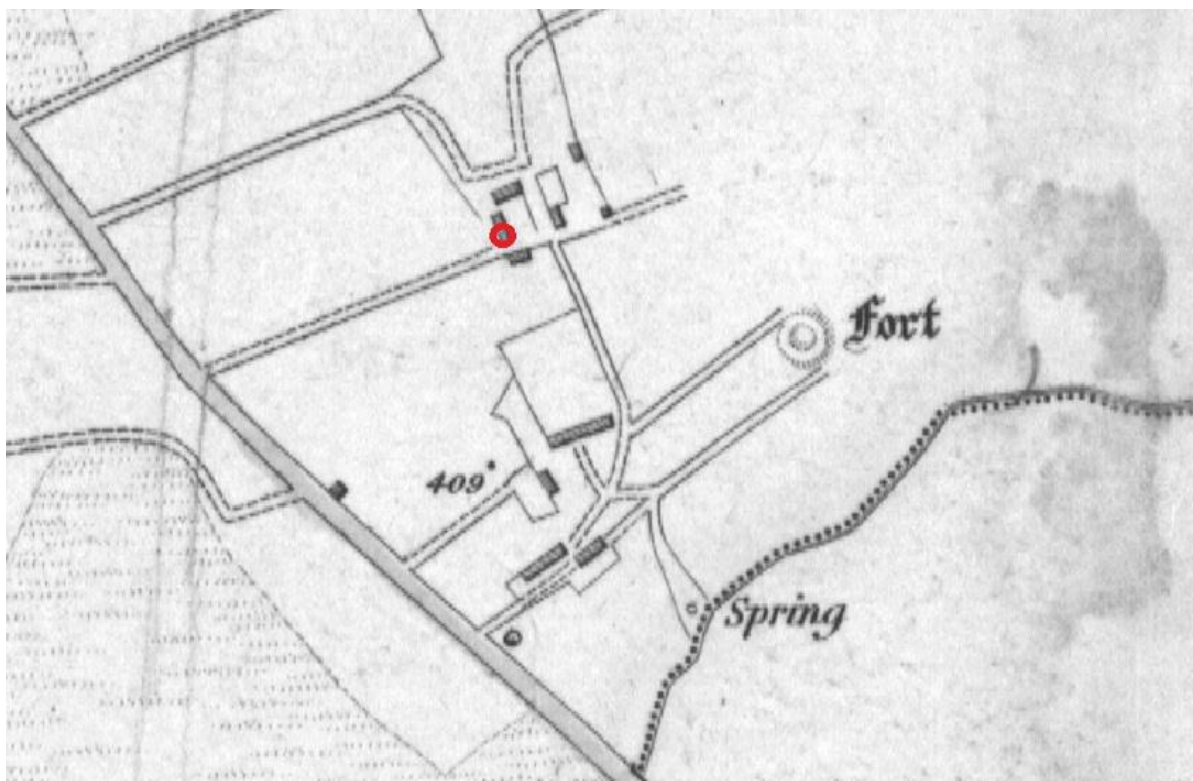


Figure Three: Detail from the first edition (1832) Ordnance Survey 6" map: County Antrim Sheet 13. The map depicts two lanes running up to the site of the 'fort'. The farmhouse at 11 Bregagh Road is indicated by a red circle.

between October 1837 and March 1838. Stokes recorded that 'in the townland of Carivcashel there is a cashial [i.e. cashel] with the foundations of an oblong building containing 2 rooms on the top of it. The architecture of the surrounding wall is very irregular, that is to say, it contains stones of very unequal dimensions. In one part only do they approach to any degree of uniformity. ... It should be remarked, however, that all along the foundation of the wall they are laid more regularly and are more uniform in size. The hill in the interior is all made of small stones with earth intermixed. The space between the wall and the circle ... appears to be made of stones and earth also. Its average height is from 3 to 5 feet, but at the place ... which is evidently the entrance to the oblong building, it is absent, and its place supplied by some stones piled up in modern times. At the northern side of this doorway there is a prostrate standing stone partly embedded in the ground. It is 4 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 10 inches. The whole of the monument is in good preservation' (Day and McWilliams 1992, 69). Stokes prepared three illustrations of the monument - a plan showing a sub-rectangular structure on the summit of the mound (presumably the 'oblong building containing 2 rooms'), a 'section' [more accurately described as a profile] across the mound and an elevation depicting the view from the southeast (reproduced below as Figure Four). The illustrations of the monument prepared by Stokes, and in particular the depiction of the sunken lane on the southern side of the mound in Stokes' plan, indicate that the monument recorded by both him and O'Laverty is undoubtedly the same as the revetted mound located approximately 125 metres to the southeast of the property at 11 Bregagh Road (i.e. Sites and Monuments Record No.

³ In Ireland during the nineteenth century, a perch was standardised unit of length of 21 feet (i.e. 6.4m).

ANT 013:026). Apart from the reference to an associated souterrain, it is notable that O'Lavery's account contains little information which could not have been copied directly from the Ordnance Survey Memoirs.

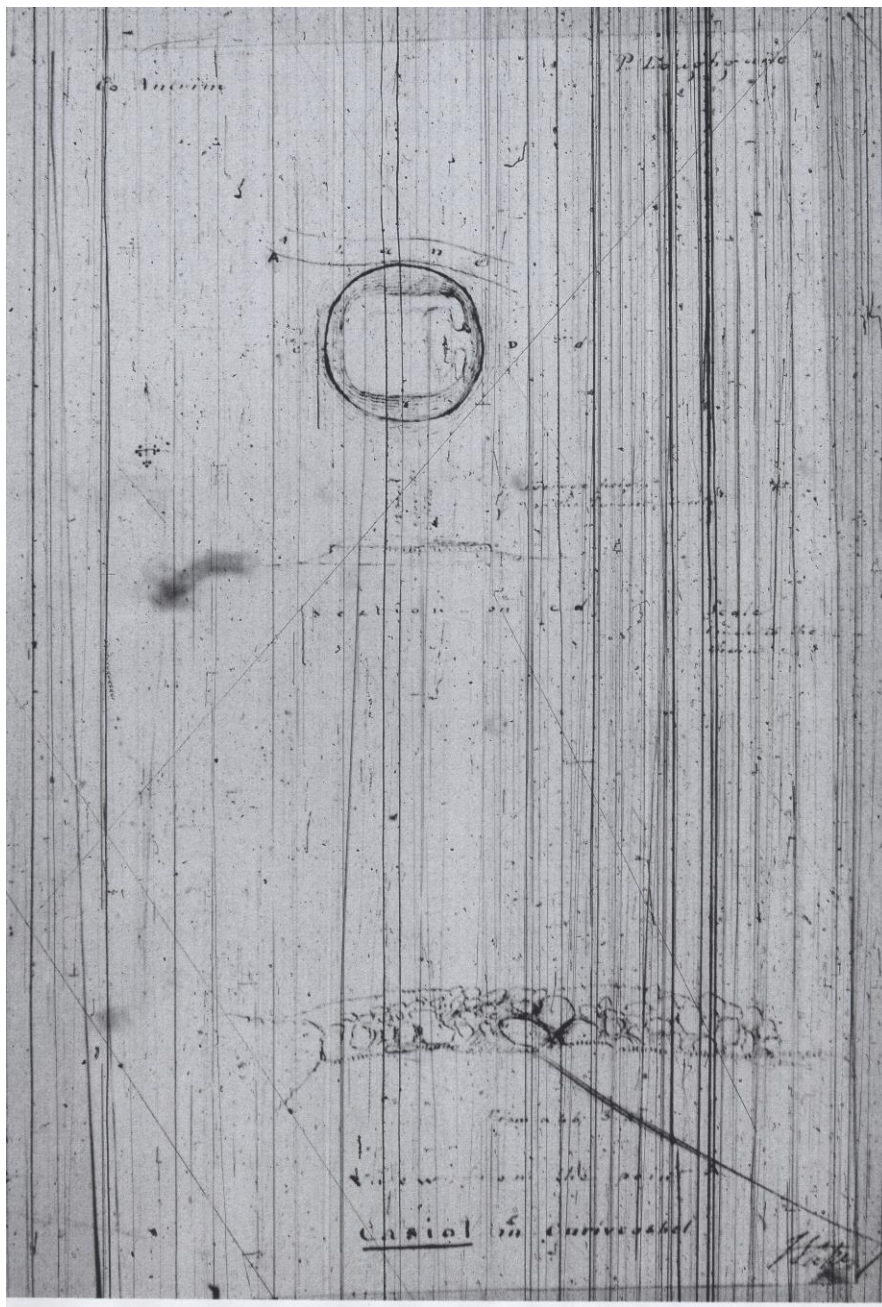


Figure Four: 'Casial in Carivcashel; plan, section and view of parapet masonry' prepared by J.Stokes for the Ordnance Survey Memoirs in 1837-1838. The poor quality of the reproduction is a consequence of the image being reproduced from a microfilm copy of the original sketches. The original drawings can be accessed in the Royal Irish Academy's collection of Ordnance Survey Memoirs - Box 14 V Sections 3-4.

The townland of Carrivcashel is located in the parish of Loughguile. The earliest known reference to the townland name occurs on Lendrick's Map of Co. Antrim (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Ref. No.T1971/1) where it is recorded as 'Carriffcashell'.

Patrick McKay and Kay Muhr consider the derivation of the place-name as obviously being *Ceathrú an Chaisil* 'quarter(land) of the stone ring-fort', which they confidently identify with the revetted mound (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:026).⁴ No trace of the souterrain noted by O'Lavery or the associated rectangular structure recorded in the Ordnance Survey Memoirs can now be identified.⁵ In its current form the revetted mound does not look like a standard raised rath or cashel, although it may well be a raised rath that has subsequently been modified. The ruined structure described by Stokes as being located upon the summit of the mound was possibly the remains of a post-medieval building with rammed-earth walls, which was accessed by the lanes depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey 6" map. This being the case, it is reasonable to suggest that the building was built upon the summit of a pre-existing mound. If Patrick McKay and Kay Muhr's plausible suggestion that the townland name refers to the revetted mound is accepted, then the mound must at least date to the 1780s. That it was recorded as an antiquity by the Ordnance Survey in 1832 suggests that it is of a significantly earlier date.

It is a distinct possibility that the early 1990s informant who reported the presence of a souterrain close to the farm located at 11 Bregagh Road was confusedly referring to O'Lavery's account of the souterrain associated with the revetted mound when he spoke to the Inspectorate.⁶ Certainly, there are no indications on the ground of a souterrain, or any other archaeological features, in the fields immediately surrounding the property at 11 Bregagh Road.

Excavation: Methodology (including statement of confidence)

The entire footprint of the extension at 11 Bregagh Road – a near-rectangular area approximately 14.5 metres by 4.5 metres in size (Figure Five) - was mechanically excavated, under the direct supervision of the licence holder, to the truncated surface of the natural boulder clay subsoil (110). Three exposed twentieth-century negative features (104, 106 and 108) were recorded but not excavated. A *sondage* was then cut into the natural subsoil (109) using a mechanical excavator, under the direct supervision of the licence holder, to a depth of between 0.6 and 0.8 metres below the truncated surface of the boulder clay in order to verify that the subsoil was not redeposited. The *sondage* was approximately 9.5 metres by 2.0 metres in size and positioned in order to avoid undermining the foundations of both the existing farmhouse building and the planned extension.

The site's stratigraphic sequence was recorded using the standard context recording method. Following the removal of the superficial deposits, the trench was photographed and an overall plan (scale 1:50) was prepared. In addition to photography and illustration, the principal site record consisted of a site diary. No small or bulk finds were recovered, nor were any samples taken. The position of the excavation trench was tied into the Irish Ordnance Survey Grid by incorporating the western wall of the farmhouse into the overall site plan. Relevant members of the NIEA Inspectorate were kept informed of all significant developments during the course of the evaluation.

⁴ <http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=16021> - accessed 23rd February 2015.

⁵ It is recorded in the SM7 file for the monument that no trace of the souterrain or rectangular structure was observed when the revetted mound was visited by a member of the Inspectorate in the early 1990s (http://apps.ehsni.gov.uk/ambit/docs/ANT/ANT_013/ANT_013_026/Public/SM7-ANT-013-026.pdf - accessed 26th January 2015). As is the case today, at that time much of the site was obscured by heavy vegetation and it is possible that a programme of clearance might reveal these features.

⁶ The familiarity of both farmers and the general population in Counties Antrim and Down with the Rev. James O'Lavery's *An Historical Account of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Ancient and Modern* should not be underestimated.

No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the excavation. The excavation of the *sondage* means that a high level of confidence can be placed upon the negative results of the excavation.

Excavation: the Results

The excavation trench, which coincided with the footprint of the planned residential extension, was laid out immediately to the west of the farmhouse at 11 Bregagh Road. The trench was near rectangular in shape, approximately 14.5 metres by 4.5 metres in size and



Figure Five: Post-excavation plan of excavation at 11 Bregagh Road, Carrivcashel.

aligned with its longest axis northnorthwest-southsoutheast. Prior to excavation this area was occupied by part of the concrete yard that surrounded the farmhouse and a small westward extension to the farmhouse which had been previously demolished without disturbing any sub-surface deposits. Mechanical excavation of the concrete yard revealed that it was made up of a raft of cement mixed with small, angular-shaped black stones (101) that extended for a depth that varied between 0.08 and 0.09 metres. In order to create a neat edge for the trench, the concrete was cut with an angle-grinder prior to its excavation.

The raft of concrete (101) that made up the surface of the yard had been laid onto a complex of various levelling deposits which extended throughout the trench and, given their obvious modern date, were excavated as a single stratigraphic unit (102). The depth of these levelling deposits varied between 0.01 and 0.15 metres - being particularly shallow at the northern end of the trench where the ground surface was highest. The complex of levelling deposits variously consisted of spreads of blinding deposits made up of small black angular stones identical to the aggregate mixed with the cement to create the concrete raft (101), layers of mixed, but fine, gravel, redeposited boulder clay and mixed hardcore. In the area underlying the demolished extension the complex of levelling deposits consisted of a general foundation of medium-sized, sub-angular to sub-rounded stones. The stratigraphic relationship between the foundation deposit below the former extension and the levelling deposits that extended out across the yard was not established.

Removal of the various levelling deposits (102) that provided a foundation for the concrete yard (101) revealed three features (104, 106, 108) cut into the truncated surface (110) of the natural subsoil (109) (Figure Five). All three of these features were of twentieth century date and were related to the demolished extension of the farmhouse. The first of these features (104) was part of the foundation cut for the northern wall of the former extension. It was aligned westsouthwest-eastnortheast, 1.55 metres long and had a width of 0.62m. The surviving foundation cut was filled with a deposit of degenerated concrete (103) that had effectively broken down into a loose mortar-rich mixed gravel with occasional inclusions of medium-sized, subrounded stones. Although unexcavated, the feature was clipped by the edge of the *sondage* revealing that it had a surviving depth of 0.10 metres. The majority of the demolished extension's wall foundations had been removed in the excavation of the levelling deposits (102) through which it was cut, however, it was possible to ascertain from the deposits in section beneath the projecting stub of the demolished extension's northern wall that the foundation was originally 0.60 metres.

The remaining two negative features (106 and 108) revealed by the excavation of the complex of levelling deposits (102) were both linear trenches cut to provide services to (and from) the former extension. They both extended from the northern edge of excavation to a point midway along the length of the demolished extension. The first of these features (106) was a 0.35 metre wide, northnorthwest-southsoutheast aligned cut associated with a twentieth-century, ceramic sewer pipe. The cutting associated with the sewer pipe was exposed for a length of approximately 4.65 metres and at its southsoutheastern end turned through a right angle towards the former position of the demolished extension. It was filled with a dark orangey brown silty clay (105) that contained small, angular to subrounded stone inclusions within which was laid the clay tile sewer pipe with a diameter of 0.15 metres (six inches). Running parallel to the sewer pipe and located only 0.40 metres to the westsouthwest of it, was a narrower cutting (108) that contained the remains of a cast iron pipe. This third negative feature was only 0.20 metres wide and was filled with a dark brown silty clay (107) with occasional inclusions of small- to medium-sized, angular to subrounded stones. The iron pipe it contained was 0.05 metres in diameter (two inches) and was almost certainly used to supply water to the former extension of the farmhouse. It was exposed for a length of approximately 4.60 metres.



Figure Six: The trench following excavation of the *sondage* looking southsoutheast. Scale 2.0 metres.

All three features were cut into the natural subsoil of orange boulder clay (109). The levelling deposits (102) lay directly upon the surface (110) of the boulder clay indicating that, at the least, the topsoil had been removed prior to construction of the yard and that probably the upper part of the boulder clay had also been removed. The boulder clay was notably uniform in character across the whole of the footprint of the trench being notably sticky and plastic in consistency and containing occasional subrounded boulders and angular to subrounded, small- and medium-sized stones. In order to verify that the boulder clay was not redeposited material capping a souterrain a rectangular-shaped *sondage* some 9.5 metres by 2.0 metres in dimension was excavated into the subsoil to a depth of up to 0.80 metres. The excavation of the *sondage* demonstrated that the boulder clay was *in situ* and not redeposited.

Concluding Remarks

No trace of either the reported souterrain (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:094), or any other deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance, were observed during the course of the excavation of the footprint of the planned extension to the farmhouse at 11 Bregagh Road. The excavation of a substantial *sondage* into the natural subsoil means that the absence of the reported souterrain can be asserted with a high degree of confidence. A reconsideration of the information contained with the Sites and Monuments Record's SM7 file relating to the reported souterrain⁷ suggests that the local informant who first reported the presence of a souterrain in close proximity to the farm at 11 Bregagh Road may have been inaccurately recounting the nineteenth-century description by the Rev. James O'Laverty of a souterrain being associated with the nearby site of a revetted mound (Sites and Monuments Record No. ANT 013:026) located some 125 metres to the southeast of the farmhouse at 11 Bregagh Road cf. O'Laverty 1887, 95. There are no indications of a souterrain, or any other archaeological feature, in the fields immediately surrounding the property at 11 Bregagh Road. Regardless of its 'negative' outcome, the excavation provided a useful opportunity to re-evaluate the revetted mound and reproduce the unpublished illustrations of the monument prepared for the Ordnance Survey Memoirs by J.Stokes in 1837-38 (Figure Four).

Bibliography

Day, A. and McWilliams, P. (eds) 1992. *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland. Volume Thirteen. Parishes of County Antrim IV, 1830-8. Glens of Antrim*, The Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast (in association with The Royal Irish Academy), Belfast.

O'Laverty, J. 1887. *An Historical Account of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Ancient and Modern. Vol.IV*, James Duffy & Sons, Dublin.

⁷ http://apps.ehnsni.gov.uk/ambit/docs/ANT/ANT_013/ANT_013_094/Public/SM7-ANT-013-094.pdf - accessed 26th January 2015.

Bibliography

Details of archive

Finds: N/A.

Photographs: Fourteen digital images [P1040913-P1040926] showing the site before and after the excavation, temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: A single post-excavation plan (Scale 1:50) of the trench showing its position relative to the western wall of the farmhouse (reproduced here as Figure Five), temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Signed: _____

Date: _____